This summer I interned at Southeast Psychological Services. This practice is well known for being experts in understanding and helping people with Asperger’s Syndrome excel at what they are good at. Southeast Psych (SEP) is also unique from other practices with their push for positive psychology, which is focusing on what clients are good at and helping them pursue a future in that area. Anyone can walk into SEP with a variety of problems: Anything from testing for a learning disability to people who have attempted murder to someone who picks at their skin so much that they are losing all of their skin to the couple who is working through problems in order to avoid divorce. There are more than thirty clinicians who all specialize in something different and work in different ways with their clients. My job was to help these clinicians with the various tasks that they needed help with.

Summer at Southeast Psych is a little different since summer is a time of vacationing and camp. Clinicians see fewer clients so they have time to work on projects that they do not focus on throughout the year. Most of the clinicians had an idea or had even begun writing a book in the area that they specialize in. Most of these long-term writers needed assistance in doing research for their books. I was designated research on mentoring for Dr. Nick Valadez, who is currently writing a book on how mentoring creates resilience. I also was working on studying faith patterns in people with Asperger’s and Autism for Dr. Kelley Bolton.

Another aspect of summer that is different than the norm is that Southeast Psych has various four day camps offered to anyone and recommended for certain clients. When camps are going on, clinicians need an extra set of hands. If you are invited, interns can provide the extra help so that camp runs smoothly. I was lucky enough to be invited to three weeks of camp. Two of the weeks I did SuperGirls! The first week was the older group of girls who were primarily diagnosed with Asperger’s or Autism. We worked on building their confidence and embracing their differences. The second week of SuperGirls! was the younger set who all had some sort of social deficiency. This week was focused on building social skills and becoming awesome girls who loved themselves. The last camp I did was a friendship camp for children with learning disabilities. We worked on mindfulness, flexibility, and basic sharing and other social skills. Each of these camps threw me in the mix of all of the diverse children and I learned primarily by watching the clinicians. As they taught the camp and supervised play, I saw how brilliant they were and the way they implement psychology into every conversation.

I had many mentors throughout my summer primarily because the therapists genuinely wanted to know what my goals were. Dr. Kelley Bolton, Dr. Frank Gaskill, Dr. Dave Verahaagen, Dr. Lauren King, Dr. Barrie Morganstein, Dr. Mary B. Moore, and Dr. Mellissa Miller all served as vital roles in my discernment process. I learned a vast amount of information about psychology and business in general. More
importantly, I learned about the type of person that I want to be throughout my career, whatever that may be. I know that integrating my faith into my work is crucial for my personal success. Also, I believe that positive psychology elicits change in clients. Finally, I know that being a mentor to young women dealing with body image concerns is an area that I feel empowered to help promote. The Lilly has set up multiple reflective practices that I plan on utilizing throughout my journey in life.